

On October 18, 2003, I returned to Phoenix from teaching a yoga workshop in Minneapolis and was greeted at the airport by my father and two brothers with the news that my 20-year-old-son, Brandon, and his 19-year-old girlfriend, Lisa, had been shot to death while camping overnight, sleeping in the back of her mother's pickup truck off the I-17 about an hour north of Phoenix, AZ.

When they didn't show up for work on Saturday morning, we all knew something must be wrong, but they weren't discovered until Sunday. There was no robbery, no apparent motivation and the case, although broadcast to the country on CNN and America's Most Wanted, was never solved.

I am a single mother and I have another child, Jessica, my beautiful 22-year-old daughter. This was a devastating loss for all of us. An unthinkable tragedy. An unimaginable pain.

My deepest sadness and fear at the time of this tragedy was that I would never again know joy. I feared that my life would always have a tone of sorrow. I set out on a mission to work in the direction of reclaiming my joy and reason for living. My spiritual journey had officially begun and after almost two years, and thousands of frequent flyer miles, landing into the open hearts of friends and strangers, I realized my son's death would renew my own life.

I have been practicing yoga for 20 years and I am certified in the Anusara method, founded by John Friend ([www.anusara.com](http://www.anusara.com)). Since 1999, I have been teaching yoga workshops internationally, including most recently in India and Asia.

I believe it has been the steadfastness and inner strength I have learned directly from my yoga practice that has enabled me not only to survive, but thrive, as Maya Angelou would say. For the first two years, I was in so much emotional pain that I couldn't help but share it in my workshops. I shared my grief openly with my students and many of them thanked me for being an example of someone not afraid to be real and true to her feelings.

I travel full time teaching yoga and believe it is a healing mission for me to go out and share what I have learned about regaining joy after such tremendous loss.

I would like to let more people know that there is a way to mentally, emotionally AND physically transform the pain and suffering of the past and truly regain motivation and a sense of peace. It is the physical piece that is particular to yoga. My healing process was also assisted by a terrific counselor and the teachings of Abraham-Hicks' principles of the law of attraction. But the physical component that yoga offers has helped me to embody the feeling of joy and freedom that tragedy, it seems, can take away.